

Francis Honda

5 August 1981

To the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment
of Civilians:

I was living at Maryknoll Orphanage for Japanese children, 425 S. Boyle Ave. in Los Angeles when I was made to wear a tag on my clothes - and was given a tree to plant and water by my teacher, a Maryknoll nun. As I was leaving, I noticed tears in her eyes, and in others that were there.

We were put on a bus, for what I thought was a short trip. I never expected to be put out in the desert like a dog - in the middle of nowhere.

I was seven years old when I went to concentration camp. They put me in the orphanage at Manzanar. The orphanage was made up of three barricks, one for the boys, one for the girls, and one mess hall.

It was a very lonely place, and sad too, with babies crying and nothing to do. It was like the end of the world for me!

The food was no good - I used to vomit and get diarrhea for weeks. My gums swelled up like marbles, and I lost all my teeth from pyorrhea. I fell off the barricks roof and broke my wrist, which never healed. I'm afraid to use it to this day to carry anything heavy. A baseball hit me in the throat - I could not speak, and did not receive any medication. Even today, I can't speak without becoming tired. At that time, I could only lie down, I thought I would never speak again. In the Winter of '43 I contacted pneumonia - I thought I was dying. No priest came to see me so I could confess my sins, I received no Communion there. When I got out of the hospital

I could not walk well nor could I run. I remember the snow on the ground-and that from this time on I could not memorize anything important like the times tables. To this day I can't memorize numbers.

I have always had jobs that paid a minimum wage. I will never have a good job because of my past sufferings at the Manzanar Concentration Camp. I went from being a good student at Maryknoll St. Francis Xavier School and Church to a mediocre American citizen for the rest of my life.

When we were taken out of the Manzanar Concentration Camp, and brought back to Los Angeles we were not allowed to visit our Church, or our school, or our orphanage. We were not allowed to see anyone - not our teachers, priests, nuns or Brother Bernard who used to drive the school bus.

When I was at Manzanar, I used to dream in my sleep that we had returned and continued in our religious training with the same Priest, nuns, and brothers. I was never so sad in my life, as when we passed Maryknoll never to return as part of that community again.

My father and three brothers and two sisters also suffered in Manzanar.

My greatest regret is that I have nothing to offer my family. We have no house, we have nothing. I don't have a good job - because I wasn't able to go to college.

I have always wanted to be a good citizen of the United States of America because I was born in this country.

Patrick Henry said "Give me Liberty or give me death". Anyone who was in a concentration camp or who is in one now would rather die fighting than live like a slave, no matter how many

slaves there are.

There should be a just payment of \$50,000 for each and every person that was interned in the concentration camps. There should also be a separate community fund for educational, religious, social and other services necessary in the Japanese communities.

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